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Politics of Science: Ain't What It Used to Be

Four months into the Reagan Administration, and the once-reigning elders of science have been reduced to a crowd of ineffectual onlookers without parallel in science's long relationship with Washington.

The problem that confronts and divides them is that, by and large, Reagan and OMB chief David Stockman haven't treated their precious budgets too badly, with the exception of the social sciences, which traditionally received more lip service than support from the "hard" science managers of the system. But though the money supply remains okay at a time when other federal retainers are getting slashed, the science mandarins have received no signal of deference from the new Administration—and they do like to be courted. But worse than that, they are beginning to realize that the Administration doesn't believe it needs them for guiding the proper care and feeding of science. And so, they are squabbling over whether prudence calls for fighting back or politely making the best of a bearable but humiliating situation.

Two key issues have surfaced so far: the still vacant, but, apparently, soon-to-be-filled post of presidential science adviser, and control of the internal affairs of the National Science Foundation, that government-owned institutional oddity, mainly run by academic scientists for the support of academic scientists.

The Reagan-era saga of the science adviser provides a study in miscues and political indifference to a position that establishment scientists venerate as their symbol of political acceptance. Politicians, on the other hand, at best regard the White House science office as a useful appendage to the presidential staff, but by no means an indispensable one. Lyndon Johnson ignored it for most of his White House years. Nixon abolished it. Ford revived it as a gesture to a Congressional clamor inspired by scientific lobbying, but not out of deepfelt need for on-board scientific counsel. Carter, after toying with its abolition, scaled it down, though he did give serious assignments to his science adviser. As for Reagan: he's off to a thundering start that's wholly unenriched by science advice from scientists.

As part of an extensively applied Reagan-Stockman pattern, the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP), the top posts at NASA, and the major research jobs at the Department of Energy were left vacant while OMB hacked and rearranged budgets. Ever since John F. Kennedy institutionalized

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Adviser Reported Chosen

The word around Washington last week was that the Reagan Administration would soon officially announce the appointment of a presidential science adviser—George Keyworth, head of the physics division at the Los Alamos National Laboratory.

Keyworth told SGR, in a telephone interview, that he's discussed the job with senior White House aides, but had not received a final decision. Age 41, Keyworth has worked at Los Alamos since receiving a PhD from Duke in 1968. Unlike all previous occupants of the position, he's had no experience in national-level policy matters. "I've dealt with local, not cosmic issues," he told SGR.

In general, the old timers in Washington science-policy circles echo the response given by Lewis M. Branscomb, Chief Scientist of IBM and Chairman of the National Science Board, who, when queried by the *New York Times* about Keyworth's reported appointment, replied: "I do not know the gentleman."

In Brief

The sciences are losing favor with college-bound high school seniors, according to field-of-study intentions surveyed by the National Opinion Research Center. In 1972, 10 per cent listed the biological sciences; by 1980, the figure was 3 per cent. Other declines: math, from 2 per cent to 1 per cent; physical sciences, from 3 per cent to 2 per cent, and social sciences, from 17 per cent to 8 per cent.

Big increases were registered in computer and information science—up from 2 per cent to five per cent. Engineering was up from 5 per cent to 10 per cent. and business rose from 13 per cent to 22 per cent.

William O. Baker, retired chief of Bell Labs and, through Republican and Democratic administrations, a major figure in White House science-advisory circles, has been named the second reicpient of the Vannevar Bush Award. The award is bestowed by the National Science Board, policymaking body of the National Science Foundation, in memory of the architect of the Foundation, and is intended to honor scientific statesmanship.

...A Dozen Said No to Science Post Offer

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the office of presidential science adviser, the occupant of that post served as science's envoy to the budget-makers. But, as the new Administration settled into office, the question of who would be the adviser couldn't be answered until Reagan and company decided whether they wanted one. SGR has been told, though we haven't been able to confirm it, that Stockman advised Reagan that OSTP functioned mainly as a money-seeking lobby for university science, and that the Administration could get along without it, but that if Reagan chose to retain OSTP, it should be scaled down.

Ultimately, the White House opted for the later and smaller model, but only after it received expressions of dismay from several of the high-tech industrial scientists who had signed on early as advisers for the election campaign. There would be a science office, they were assured, but Reagan and his inner circle didn't intend to turn it over to a freewheeling statesman of science. Whatever romantic C.P. Snow-ish illusions the mandarins might retain about presidents and scientists, the Reagan clique viewed the job as a middle-level staff function. When word about that got around, they found no takers in the upper echelons that previously served as recruiting ground for presidential science advisers.

Simon (TRW) Ramo, an early Reagan supporter and campaign adviser, was originally keen to cap his illustrious career with a tour as presidential science adviser. But after learning of the new Administration's conception of the job, lost interest. GE's Arthur M. Bueche rejected a feeler, insisting that he didn't care to move to Washington, but it's known that he, too, was dismayed by the modest role planned for the adviser.

Word then got around that the White House was interested in Norman Hackerman, President of Rice University, who was being pushed by fellow Texan George Bush. It's not clear whether Hackerman ever got an explicit offer, since presidential protocol calls for prospective appointees to agree to say Yes before they're formally asked. Some say he got two offers and rejected both. Whatever the case, some old hands in Washington science-advisory circles, recalling Hackerman's lackluster performance from 1974-80 as chairman of the National Science Board, NSF's purported policymaking body, took to the journalistic leak route in an effort to shoot down that prospect.

All in all, it's said that at least a dozen serious approaches were made before the White House finally decided on George Keyworth, the Los Alamos physics chief who, at this writing, is widely reported to be all set for the job.

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And Here's the Membership of the National Science Board

LEWIS M. BRANSCOMB (Chairman) IBM, Vice President and Chief Scientist.

HERBERT D. DOAN (Vice Chairman) Chairman, Doan Resources Corporation, Midland, Michigan.

RAYMOND L. BISPLINGHOFF, Vice President for Research and Development, Tyco Laboratories, Exeter, New Hampshire.

LLOYD M. COOKE, President, National Action Council for Minorities in Engineering, Inc., New York.

EUGENE H. COTA-ROBLES, Professor of Biology, University of California, Santa Cruz.

PETER T. FLAWN, President, University of Texas at Austin.

ERNESTINE FRIEDL, Dean of Arts and Sciences, Duke University.

MARY L. GOOD, Vice President, Director of Research, UOP, Inc., Des Plaines, Illinois.

JOHN R. HOGNESS, President, Association of Academic Health Centers, Washington, D.C.

WILLIAM F. HUEG, JR., Deputy Vice President and Dean, Institute of Agriculture, Forestry, and Home Economics, University of Minnesota.

MICHAEL KASHA, Distinguished Professor of Physical Chemistry, Institute of Molecular Biophysics, Florida State University, Tallahassee.

MARIAN E. KOSHLAND, Professor of Bacteriology and Immunology, Department of Bacteriology and Immunology, University of California at Berkeley.

PETER D. LAX, Professor of Mathematics, Courant Institute of Mathematical Sciences, New York University.

WALTER E. MASSEY, Director, Argonne National Laboratory, Argonne, Illinois.

HOMER A. NEAL, Dean of Research and Graduate Development, Indiana University, Bloomington.

MARY JANE OSBORN, Professor and Head, Department of Microbiology, University of Connecticut School of Medicine, Farmington, Connecticut.

JOSEPH M. PETTIT, President, Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta.

DAVID V. RAGONE, President, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland.

DONALD B. RICE, JR., President, The Rand Corporation, Santa Monica, California.

STUART A. RICE, Frank P. Hixon Distinguished Service Professor of Chemistry, The James Franck Institute, University of Chicago.

ALEXANDER RICH, Sedgwick Professor of Biophysics, Department of Biology.

EDWIN E. SALPETER, J.G. White Professor of Physical Sciences, Cornell University.

CHARLES P.L SLICHTER, Professor of Physics and in the Center for Advanced Study, University of Illinois, Urbana.

Member Ex Officio

JOHN B. SLAUGHTER (Chairman, Executive Committee), Director, National Science Foundation.

...Science Board Assailed on Budget Cuts

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While the establishment leaders look with unease and uncertainty at the diminished White House science office, several of them have been uttering unusually acerbic remarks about the rough handling given NSF's social and behavioral sciences and education programs, who's to blame, and why didn't the National Science Board, composed of private citizens, protest Reagan's usurpation of its statutory responsibilities (SGR Vol. XI, No. 9).

Some of the most critical comments came from Philip Handler, retiring President of the National Academy of Sciences, in his farewell annual report to the NAS annual meeting last month. Referring to the Science Board's long, convoluted, and passive acceptance of the drubbing NSF took from OMB, Handler conceded that "To have been more forthright in their statement may have been to raise the specter of a confrontation concerning whether the Board is subject to administrative discipline. And in the backs of their minds may have been concern that public confrontation might result in adverse future treatment of NSF.

"But," continued Handler, "in crafting a statement in which protest is to be found only by sophisticated reading between the lines, so that, while surely unwelcome at OMB, it met OMB approval for public release, the Board risked seeming to be party to the OMB actions. For example, their first paragraph indicates that 'The emergency precluded the normal process of discussion of program priorities in which the Board could participate meaningfully.'

" 'Emergency?' " What emergency? The fact that NSF was given but 24 hours, when the Board was not in town, in which to defend its right to support social science and science education, *inter alia,* is preposterous."

In another comment on OMB's unilateral changes in the NSF budget, Handler said, "I must confess a sense of outrage with the notion that OMB, rather than appropriate scientists, may dictate which fields of scholarly endeavor are acceptable or important at

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NAS Head States "Outrage"

The following excerpts are from President Philip Handler's annual report to the National Academy of Sciences, April 28, in Washington.

●

It is evident that the scientific community must resign itself to the fact that the political world will insist on emptying and refilling these highest level scientific positions with the change of administrations. With the exception of the Director of NSF, incumbents have no tenure. New presidents want their own teams and it is difficult to argue otherwise when an agency head is responsible for billions of dollars and the formulation of policy. What we may ask, nay demand, is that the scientific community be adequately consulted in these regards so that new appointees may be certified for their technical competence, whatever their political views....

I must confess a sense of outrage with the notion that the OMB, rather than appropriate scientists, may dictate which fields of scholarly endeavor are acceptable or important at NSF.

Moreover, we natural scientists would be ill-advised to stand aside and allow the social scientists to carry that battle. The entirety of science is a "seamless web." If the government's science budget can be fashioned by such ideological behavior, which field of science will next suffer political attack? There are indications.

If social science can be ordained by OMB to be outside the federal ken, then the way is paved. Creationists and Right to Lifers and the Moral Majority will seek to have education concerning evolution and human reproduction expunged from the secondary schools while exercising pressure to secure removal from the appropriations to NSF and NIH of any funds that might be used for research on evolution or reproductive bioligy. And if the physical scientists are feeling relaxed—I remind them of Galileo. Again, one must hope that the Congress will reverse this decision.

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...Mandarins on the Outside Looking In

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NSF."

An even more critical blast at the Science Board's behavior was made by John T. Wilson, President emeritus of the University of Chicago and former Deputy Director of NSF, in a scathing letter to Board Chairman Lewis M. Branscomb.

"Is the Board statement," Wilson inquired, "asking us to assume that during the period following the election of the President until the February meeting of the Board, there was no awareness in the staff of the Foundation, the staff of the Board, or in the Board itself of the directions and the extent of the budget cuts? Or that there was no way to communicate Board views. . .?

"Your memorandum," Wilson continued to Branscomb, "indicates that the Board statement is intended, among other things, to '. . .reassure the scientific and academic communities. . .' . . .To me, it does just the opposite."

And, referring to the McCarthy era, Wilson concluded, "One need only recall a predecessor to the present Board that successfully challenged those who threatened the grant support program with political litmus tests for principal investigators."

Finally, from William D. Carey, Executive Officer of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, we have a *real politik* analysis of the Board's cave-in, viewed in terms of who's got the firepower and it's not NSF or the Board. Carey, who retired from the old Bureau of the Budget in 1969 after 27 years' service, makes that point in a commentary that he wrote following an inquiry from SGR. Harsh though his analysis may be, there's a lot of good sense and inside experience behind it, so we publish it in full in the adjacent box.

The paradox of science's present political discomfort is that the material needs of research are—with some exceptions—being attended to in an Administration otherwise dedicated to parsimony. What's bothering the mandarins is the realization that this Administration has dispensed with all illusions about the sovereignty of the research community and the cultural value of science. Reagan and company are pumping money into research because they think research is militarily and industrially useful.

It's a singleminded, unsentimental approach to science—certainly not new in the postwar period, but now unaccompanied by ceremonial deference and sweet-talk. For the oldtimers on the science side of the relationship, it's very threatening.—DSG

Carey: OMB Has the Power

The following commentary is by William D. Carey, Executive Officer of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Before we pin a "Who Lost China" label on the National Science Board for not blocking OMB's raid on science education and the social sciences, there are a few things to consider.

Basic science has a feeble and apolitical constituency in a tough political world. I credit OMB and its ancestor the Budget Bureau with filling the vacuum and taking very good care indeed of basic science for many years.

Bear in mind that OMB works for the President, not for the agencies. If a President goes for a predetermined budget target in a whirlwind thirty days, a wheel is likely to come off. OMB is hardly going to tell its boss that he must keep hands off NSF.

The central problem is that government has been so good to science over the years that science has become chronically dependent on government. What started off as a postwar partnership has become something else, as science progressively gave up its negotiating authority. A few of us have been saying this for a number of years. When science is financed in the name of the national interest, it has to take its chances on how the national interest is defined at any given time.

The National Science Board had no negotiating authority. OMB was enforcing tight budget discipline throughout government and was in no mood to entertain appeals. The administration was not dismantling NSF but recalling Mr. Carter's exit increases. The hard sciences were not cut, and R&D in general was robust under the Reagan figures. Meanwhile, *pro forma* resignations of all NSF's appointive officials had been submitted and were in a sense hostage to the Board's acquiescence.

True, the Board was told, not asked. In other tight years, OMB conceded choices to the agencies as to how the misery was to be parceled around. This time it was a directed verdict and an encroachment on the responsibilities of the Science Board. When all the authority is on one side of a partnership, it's obvious that science wasn't paying attention.

IoM Sets Up 3 Health Science Units

Monitoring boards covering three areas of the health sciences will be established by the Institute of Medicine (IoM) under a one-year, $331,650 grant from the US Public Health Service. The areas are: mental health and behavioral medicine, health care services, and health promotion and disease prevention.

Humanities Brace for Major Budget Decline

Like their colleagues in the social sciences, humanities scholars face budget cuts motivated by political ideology paired with a desire to reduce federal spending. Some members of the Reagan camp believe it is wrong in principle for Washington to support the humanities in any way. Others take a more moderate view: limited funding of pure scholarship is acceptable, but the present National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), allegedly bloated and politicized by the Carter Administration, must be pruned back drastically.

The 50 per cent cut which Reagan has proposed in the 1982 NEH budget—and the suspicion that the White House may be plotting to eliminate the Endowment altogether—has forced the humanities to beef up lobbying muscles that became somewhat flaccid as Congress boosted the NEH appropriation from zero to $152 million between 1965 and 1980. The National Humanities Alliance, a coalition of 23 organizations formed this year, is coordinating the battle manfully, but it seems resigned to losing at least 30 per cent of NEH funds; to keep the cut down to a quarter would be regarded as a great victory.

The humanities are handicapped by the loss of longstanding supporters of the humanities in last November's massacre of Congressional liberals, including Sen. Jacob Javits (R-NY) and Rep. John Brademas (D-Ind.). A few old friends are left, and one, Rep. Sidney Yates (D-Ill.), is chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on the Interior, which takes in the NEH and National Endowment for the Arts (NEA).

Yates became infuriated when NEH chairman Joseph Duffey appeared before his Subcommittee two weeks ago and seemed to be meekly accepting the 50 per cent cut. He told Duffey, a Carter appointee whose four-year term ends in September, to stop defending the Reagan budget and prepare proposals for smaller cuts, 10, 15 and 25 per cent. In the Senate, however, the Subcommittee on the Interior and Related Agencies is now headed by Sen. James McLure (R-Idaho) and is expected to appropriate no more than the $85 million requested by the Administration.

Admittedly, the Endowment's research program stands to lose less than its other activities. If the total budget is halved, NEH officials plan to cut research by about 28 per cent (to $13 million) and slash public programs and challenge grants by more than 60 per cent. The Endowment would be able to fund one in every five or six of the research proposals that reach it; at present one application in three succeeds.

The leaner NEH that emerges next year will have shed most of the excessive populism that Republican critics accused chairman Duffey and the Carter Administration of fostering over the past four years with enthusiastic encouragement from Sen. Claiborne Pell (D-RI), then Chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on the Arts and Humanities. It will be moving back towards the "elitism" that Pell deplored in 1976 when he blocked President Ford's reappointment of Ronald Berman as NEH Chairman. There will still be funds for academic research in history, literature, and philosophy, but almost certainly none for women's groups to make films about the struggle of office workers for better conditions (to quote a favorite example of the critics of NEH "politicization" under the Carter Administration).

In three or four years time, however, the NEH may no longer exist. Last week the White House set up a Task Force on the Arts and Humanities that will examine the future of the two endowments and, in Reagan's words, "deliver to my desk by Labor Day a plan to make better use of existing federal resources and to increase the support for the arts and humanities by the private sector."

The task force will be examining one idea, favored by some of Reagan's advisers, to convert the NEH and NEA from government agencies to public corporations, perhaps along the lines of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. They could then attract private and corporate support to make up some of the federal funds removed by the Administration.

University scholars would not necessarily be opposed to an independent non-political corporation for the humanities. But they would object strongly to a combined corporation for the arts *and* humanities—a variant of the proposal that has also been floated in Republican circles. Humanities scholarship would almost certainly lose out to the greater political appeal of the arts if NEH and NEA were merged.

However, humanities lobbyists were encouraged by the Administration's choice of Hanna Holborn Gray, President of the University of Chicago, as one of the three co-chairmen of the task force. (The other two will be actor Charlton Heston and Daniel Terra, who has been designated ambassador-at-large for cultural affairs.) They do not believe Gray would have agreed to serve if the task force's hidden agenda was to prepare for the abolition of NEH.

Indeed some observers believe the most likely outcome of the exercise would be a recommendation to preserve both endowments in roughly their present form. That would make it difficult for White House conservatives to turn the clock back to the early 1960s, when the federal government provided no direct support for the humanities.—CC

'70s Saw Big Growth for Science, NSF Says

It didn't sound that way from the howls coming out of academe, but the US government took good financial care of university-based science during the latter half of the 1970s, according to figures compiled by the National Science Foundation.

Between fiscal years 1975 and 1979 (which ended Sept. 30, 1979), federal obligations for research and development in academic institutions rose an average of 14 per cent a year in current dollars; that works out to 7 per cent annually in "real" terms, NSF says, though the deflator it uses probably doesn't reflect the full cost increases of conducting research.

The 1975-79 increases were "considerably higher," NSF points out, "than the 9 per cent annual average (4 per cent in real dollars) which occurred between 1963 and 1975." And it adds that "The increased federal support of academic research and development in recent years reflects an effort by federal policymakers to raise the level of support for basic research"—up, from $2.5 billion to $4.1 billion annually, with about half the money going to academic institutions.

From NSF's tabulations, it is plain that the rich of academic science either get richer or stay rich. "Historically," the Foundation reports, "the proportion of all federal academic R&D support to the leading R&D universities has varied little." And the report writers add, deadpan, that the reason is that "Research projects are awarded on a merit basis to the relatively small number of institutions possessing (1) significant concentrations of highly qualified scientists and engineers, and (2) facilities to conduct research."

In any case, of the 667 academic institutions that received federal R&D money in 1979, the top 100 got 84 per cent and the top 10 collected 27 per cent. The Hopkins and Howard one-two standings in total receipts require explanation, since some $200 million of Hopkins' federal funds are for running the Applied Physics Lab for the Defense Department; Howard is, in large part, financed by federal appropriations. Here, then, are the top 50, as listed in the NSF Report 81-303, 4 pages, available without charge from: NSF, Division of Science Resource Studies, 1800 G St., NW, Washington, DC 20550.

Federal obligations to 50 universities and colleges receiving the largest amounts: FY 1979

[Dollars in thousands]

Institution	Total U.S. Funds	R&D	R&D Rank
United States Total	6,195,596	3,846,321	
1. Johns Hopkins Univ	291,020	274,143	1
2. Howard Univ	130,047	5,718	133
3. Mass Inst of Technology	124,731	110,033	2
4. Univ of Washington	112,537	88,037	4
5. Stanford Univ	109,710	93,596	3
6. Univ of Cal-Los Angeles	102,686	86,698	5
7. Univ of Wis-Madison	99,171	75,597	8
8. Univ of Minnesota	97,903	64,263	12
9. Univ of Cal-San Diego	96,091	85,464	6
10. Harvard University	93,457	75,802	7
11. Columbia Univ-Main Div	88,954	73,759	9
12. Cornell Univ	86,048	68,927	10
13. Univ of Michigan	81,729	62,800	14
14. Univ of Pennsylvania	80,346	65,179	11
15. Yale Univ	75,950	63,079	13
16. Univ of Cal-San Francisco	72,967	59,395	15
17. Univ of Cal-Berkeley	66,746	52,568	16
18. Pennsylvania State Univ	62,623	44,044	20
19. Univ of Southern Cal	61,440	50,144	18
20. Univ of Chicago	60,046	50,693	17
21. Univ of Ill-Urbana	58,057	43,954	21
22. Univ of NC at Chapel Hill	57,428	40,179	23
23. Washington Univ	56,794	47,943	19
24. Ohio State Univ	56,271	33,325	31
25. Univ of Colorado	54,980	35,765	26
26. Duke Univ	51,668	41,728	22
27. New York Univ	51,186	38,891	24
28. Gallaudet College	45,757	164	361
29. Univ of Texas at Austin	45,525	37,472	25
30. Univ of Utah	44,341	35,251	29
31. Yeshiva Univ	43,678	35,305	28
32. Univ of Rochester	43,663	35,427	27
33. Michigan State Univ	43,597	27,021	41
34. Univ of Pittsburgh	43,476	31,317	33
35. Univ of Iowa	43,010	33,033	32
36. Univ of Miami	41,199	27,336	40
37. Purdue Univ	41,176	30,832	35
38. Univ of Arizona	40,777	29,846	36
39. Texas A&M Univ	40,479	26,238	43
40. Univ of Cal-Davis	39,324	33,441	30
41. Northwestern Univ	38,521	31,087	34
42. Univ Alabama-Birmingham	37,984	26,776	42
43. Case Western Reserve Univ	37,706	29,189	39
44. Cal Inst of Tech	35,442	29,574	38
45. Univ of Florida	34,807	22,052	48
46. Baylor Col of Med	33,268	29,806	37
47. Boston Univ	32,893	20,925	52
48. Univ of New Mexico	31,858	20,048	55
49. Univ of Virginia	31,167	22,619	47
50. Univ of Tennessee-Knoxville	30,870	18,704	61
Total 1st 50 institutions	3,281,004	2,465,187	

Auto Role Sought for NASA

A bill to put NASA into automotive research has been introduced by Rep. Thomas R. Harkin, Democrat of Ames, Iowa, who says that the Department of Energy has been doing a poor job in that field of research. Harkin's bill, backed by 33 co-sponsors and titled the Automotive Research Act of 1981, would launch NASA's automotive research efforts with an authorization of $25 million.

NAS Resolution Hits Social Science Cuts

It may be that they're worried about who's next. Whatever the cause, the National Academy of Sciences, which still gives relatively little recognition to the social sciences, passed a strongly worded resolution at its annual meeting last month in protest against the Reagan Administration's cuts of social science funds in the National Science Foundation budget. Following is the text:

●

Whereas, the research conducted by behavioral and social scientists (commonly organized into the disciplines of anthropology, economics, geography, political science, psychology, sociology, and the history and philosophy of science) plays an undeniable part in the advancement of the frontiers of basic science, and

Whereas, the findings from such research are often of national importance for the design, implementation and evaluation of social, scientific, and technical programs at many levels of government, and

Whereas, highly selective reductions proposed in federal support for basic research in these sciences, particularly in the FY 82 budget for the NSF, are so large as to endanger the continued vitality and progress of this field of scientific inquiry, and are significantly out of proportion to changes in funding levels proposed for basic research in other disciplines,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT

The National Academy of Sciences expresses its deep concern over the proposed severe reductions in federal support for basic research in the behavioral and social sciences. The Academy believes that some of the prospective severe damage to the behavioral and social sciences could be remedied by giving the NSF authority, within its total budget, to make its allocations to the various research areas on the basis of its judgment of the quality and merit of the proposed research. The Academy further directs the President of the National Academy of Sciences to convey its views to appropriate officials of the federal government including the President, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, the Chairman of the National Science Board, and the Chairmen of the cognizant committees of the Congress of the United States.

Letter to the Editor

"ADAMHA Concocts Social-Science 'Definition' " (SGR Vol. XI, No. 7) may have been misleading in several respects. First, it failed to explain why it is necessary for the agency to consider a policy of funding more focused social research, and second, it characterized as "political cunning" an honest attempt to continue the support of social research most useful to our three health fields.

Since the budget decision has been made that social research will not be given high priority in Federal support of research in these times of economic distress, we are attempting to examine the contributions and role of social research specific to our mission.

The agency's draft proposal to Dr. (Edward) Brandt (Under Secretary of Health and Human Services)—from which you quote—was not intended to define "Social research," but was an operational definition of what the agency may fund. We have proposed consideration of social research clearly pertinent to the clinical health problems associated with alcohol and drug abuse, mental illness, and emotional disorders.

We did not attempt to define social research broadly, nor do we imply that social research does not contribute to human knowledge. Rather, we were proposing, in light of necessary fiscal restraints, that social research funded by this agency be specifically relevant to its mission—the causes, treatment, and prevention of these three public health problems, each of which involve a complex of physical and environment factors.

We appreciate your interest, but a better informed report may have been more useful to your subscribers.

Robert L. Trachtenberg
Acting Administrator
Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and
Mental Health Administration

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OECD Says US Still Leads in R&D Spending

The US still leads the West and Japan in percentage of gross domestic product devoted to research and development, according to the latest compilations of the 24-nation Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

The latest figures, published in the March 1981 issue of the bi-monthly magazine *The OECD Observer,* lists US R&D for 1979-80 at 2.4 per cent of gross domestic product. Switzerland is next, with 2.3 per cent, and then come Britain and Germany, with 2.1 per cent each. Figures for other nations include: Sweden and Japan, 1.9; France, 1.8, and Norway, 1.4.

For perspective, it's useful to keep in mind that the US figures have drooped from a previous high of around 3 per cent in the 1960s, while Japan and Germany have increased the proportions of their national wealth devoted to R&D. In addition, over half of US government R&D spending is for military purposes, a proportion that far exceeds that of most other OECD nations.

NSF Equal Opportunities Unit To Seek New Approaches

The National Science Foundation has a big new Committee on Equal Opportunities in Science and Technology, but the spending that the Congressionally mandated group was supposed to guide has been wiped out in the Reagan budget for Fiscal 1982.

Just what it will do isn't clear. According to an NSF staff member, the committee will attempt to promote career opportunities for women and minority-group members in all of NSF's programs, rather than through special programs for which funds are to be eliminated.

The chairman of the new committee is Cora B. Marrett, Professor of Sociology at the University of Wisconsin. She was appointed by NSF Director John B. Slaughter, who, prior to taking office, said that he accorded a top priority to the Foundation's women and minority programs. A statement accompanying announcement of Marrett's appointment refers to Slaughter as saying that "he would ask the Committee to explore the nature of barriers that may inhibit women and minorities in scientific and engineering research."

Scheduled for elimination in 1982 is the five-year-old Women in Science Program, which now has an annual budget of $2 million. Two programs scheduled to start up next year are to be eliminated—the $5 million National Research Opportunity Grants program and the $1 million Visiting Professor program.

Other appointees to the Committee are:
Don Colesto Ahshapanek, Haskell American Indian Jr. College
Carol Jo Crannell, NASA Goddard Space Flight Center
Ewaugh Fields, University of District of Columbia
Robert A. Finnell, UC Berkeley
Sheila Pfafflin, AT&T Human Resources Dept.
Margaret W. Rossiter, Institute for the History of Science, Berkeley
Danuta K. Smith, ARCO Chemical Co.
John E. Gibson, University of Virginia
Robert Harvey, Knoxville College
Lilli S. Hornig, Wellesley College
Diana Marinez, Michigan State University
Carl Spight, AMAF Industries
Richard Tapia, Rice University
John G. Truxal, SUNY, Stony Brook
Eugene H. Cota-Robles, UC Santa Cruz.

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